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Letter dated 9 July 1998 from the Permanent Representatives of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We hereby have the honour to transmit the text of the Joint Declaration by the participants in the Almaty meeting – China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan – signed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of those States on 3 July 1998 (see annex). We should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 43, 64, 71, 81, 95, 96, 98, 104 and 152.

(*Signed*) **Qin** Huasun
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(*Signed*) A. **Arystanbekova**
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Annex

[Original: Chinese/Russian]

Joint Declaration by the participants in the Almaty Meeting – the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan

The People's Republic of China, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan, hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

On the basis of the common aspiration of the States participating in the present Meeting to expand and strengthen multilateral cooperation in the context of the Agreements on confidence building in the military field in the border area and on the mutual reduction of their armed forces in the border area, signed by them in Shanghai and Moscow in 1996 and 1997, respectively,

Expressing satisfaction at the progressive development of relations of good-neighbourliness, friendship, mutual confidence and all-round cooperation among the five States,

Subscribing to the universally acknowledged principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and non-interference in internal affairs, and also advocating the solution of disputes and differences of opinion among countries by means of friendly consultations,

Emphasizing the unity of views to the effect that the further expansion and strengthening of bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the five States in a spirit of good-neighbourliness and friendship is in conformity with the vital interests of their peoples and is an important positive factor for stability, security, development and prosperity in the region and in Asia as a whole,

Bearing in mind the important role of large-scale economic cooperation in the strengthening of regional peace and stability,

Taking into account the growing influence in Central Asia of the worldwide trend to the establishment of multilateral coordination and cooperation structures,

In accordance with the results of the present Meeting, have declared the following:

1. The Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure rigorous implementation of the Agreement on confidence building in the military field in the border area of 26 April 1996 and the Agreement on the mutual reduction of their armed forces in the border area of 24 April 1997, and again emphasize the importance of regular consultations for the purpose of discussing the progress in the implementation of those agreements.

The Parties highly appreciate the important positive impact the Shanghai and Moscow Agreements have had on security in the region, and also throughout the world, and regard them as a concrete manifestation of the new concept of security that developed after the ending of the "cold war" and has steadily been gaining ground, and as a successful experiment in strengthening regional and global security and cooperation. The cooperation among the five States is open in nature and is not directed against other countries.

2. The Parties, on the basis of the realities of the region, have agreed actively to develop bilateral and regional dialogue and consultations on security questions, and welcome the inclusion in this process of all interested States in the region.

Agreement was reached on the convening as necessary of meetings at the level of experts, ministers for foreign affairs, heads of Government and heads of State to discuss issues of guaranteeing security and expanding cooperation in Central Asia and on the Asian continent as a whole.

3. The Parties support the basic ideas contained in the proposal of Kazakhstan for the convening of a conference on cooperation and confidence-building measures in Asia, and called for the active continuation of study of these ideas. They take a positive view of the initiative put forward by the central Asian States for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in central Asia.

4. The Parties expressed readiness to continue in-depth consultations on the basic international problems and issues of the situation in Asia, and also to hold as necessary consultations within the framework of the United Nations and in other international and regional organizations and forums.

5. The Parties are agreed that any manifestations of national separatism, ethnic intolerance and religious extremism are unacceptable. They will take steps to combat international terrorism, organized crime, illegal transport of arms, illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and other forms of international criminal activity, and to prevent the use of the territories of their States for the organization of activities detrimental to the State sovereignty, security and social order of any of the five States.

6. The Parties agreed that, in developing economic cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, the following fundamental principles should be adhered to:

- Mutual granting of the terms of trade accepted in international practice in order to expand the volume of reciprocal commodity circulation,
- Encouraging and supporting various forms of interregional and border-area trade and economic cooperation as well as cooperation between the major enterprises and companies of the five States,
- Improving the investment climate in each of the five States and establishing conditions for increasing investments in economic projects in their territories.

7. The Parties concluded that there was a need for the all-round strengthening and encouragement of large-scale, long-term cooperation in all areas of the economy, including the pipeline infrastructure for transporting oil and gas, as well as rail, automobile, water and air transport.

In this regard, the Parties will, first of all, focus on modernizing and using the existing transport and pipeline infrastructures that exist between them and that are linked to other countries and will, above all, take into consideration the profitability, reliability and security of existing facilities and those being re-established, with account taken of the national and economic interests of the countries in whose territories they are being laid.

The Parties welcome participation in these projects by all interested States and the companies of other countries.

The Parties also attach importance to mutually beneficial cooperation based on equal rights in the field of energy, including the study of projects on reciprocal deliveries and the transit of electrical energy to other countries.

The Parties give serious attention to protecting the environment in the region and are prepared to cooperate to achieve this goal.

8. The Parties consider that profound changes are occurring in the international situation, that the tempo of economic globalization is speeding up and that there is an increasingly obvious trend towards multi-polarity in the world, which will make it possible to ensure international stability and create conditions for the social and economic development of the various States of the world. Peace and development have already become some of the basic topics that are of general interest for the peoples of all countries.

At the same time, a number of recent events show that the world community is still far from achieving the goals of ensuring lasting peace and stability.

9. The Parties express apprehension about the continuing tension in Afghanistan and call for stepped-up efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the internal Afghan conflict with account taken of the interests of all the ethnic and denominational groups and political forces involved in it, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the countries concerned.

The Parties welcome the initiatives put forward and being supported by the United Nations for settling the Afghan conflict, including the holding of a peace conference on Afghanistan in Bishkek.

10. The Parties express serious concern in connection with the increased tension in the adjacent southern Asian region after the nuclear tests conducted there.

The Parties intend to assist, together with the entire international community, efforts to eliminate mistrust and halt the nuclear arms race in southern Asia and also promote compliance with the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In this context, the Parties call upon all the States that have not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to accede to those Treaties unconditionally.

11. The Parties confirm that, in order to achieve general peace and prosperity in the twenty-first century, it is necessary to create a new, just and rational international political and economic order. They are filled with determination to transform the relations based on good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation among the five countries into an ongoing and major factor for stability, security and development throughout the Eurasian land mass.

For the Republic of Kazakhstan
(*Signed*) Kasymjomart **Tokaev**

For the Chinese People's Republic
(*Signed*) **Tang** Jiaxuan

For the Kyrgyz Republic
(*Signed*) Muratbek **Imanaliev**

For the Russian Federation
(*Signed*) Evgeny **Primakov**

For the Republic of Tajikistan
(*Signed*) Talbak **Nazarov**

Almaty, 3 July 1998